

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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R 171400Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7172

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV, MA

SUBJECT: DISPUTE BETWEEN GOMR AND OIL MARKETING COMPANIES:
CALTEX MANAGER RECEIVES EXIT VISA

REF: TANANARIVE 0561

1. CALTEX MANAGER JULIAN DASHIELL RECEIVED EXIT VISA TO DEPART MADAGASCAR APRIL 15, FINALLY ENDING RESTRICTION ON HIS TRAVEL (AND THOSE OF OTHER OIL COMPANY GENERAL MANAGERS) WHICH HAD LASTED SINCE SEPTEMBER 1974.

2. ALTHOUGH NEW FINANCE MINISTER MAJOR RAKOTOARIJAONA INFORMED AMBASSADOR MARCH 28 OF HIS DECISION TO CANEL RESTRICTION PLACED BY PRECEDING FINANCE MINISTER ON TRAVEL OF OIL COMPANY OFFICIALS (REFTEL), WHEN DASHIELL RENEWED APPLICATION FOR EXIT VISA AT MINISTRY INTERIOR APRIL 2, IT INITIALLY WAS REFUSED. WE BELIEVE FAILURE PROMPTLY TO IMPLEMENT DECISION OF FINANCE MINISTER WAS DUE TO OBSTRUCTION OR FOOT-DRAGGING BY DIRECTOR OF TREASURY RASOMEOLY, A HOLDOVER FROM RAMANTSOA ADMINISTRATION IN THE FINANCE MINISTRY WHO IS APPARENTLY HOSTILE TO OIL COMPANIES.

3. IN FURTHER ATTEMPT TO BREAK CASE LOOSE, AMBASSADOR APRIL 4 SENT FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO MINISTER OF FINANCE INFORMING HIM OF RENEWED REFUSAL DASHIELL'S EXIT VISA APPLICATION, DESPITE MINISTER'S ASSURANCES TO AMBASSADOR MARCH 28. EMBOFF ALSO CALLED ON DIRECTOR IMMIGRATION IN MINISTRY INTERIOR,

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WHO PINPOINTED DIRECTION OF TREASURY AS WITHHOLDING CONCURRENCE.

EMBASSY WAS PREPARED TO FOLLOW UP FURTHER, BUT ON APRIL 14 SECGEN OF MINISTRY OF FINANCE (A NEW APPOINTEE) INFORMED DASHIELL RESTRICTION ON HIS TRAVEL NOW LIFTED, AND EXIT VISA WAS ISSUED BY INTERIOR MINISTRY NEXT DAY. ESSO MANAGER GAUTRET NOTIFIED HE CLEARED FOR EXIT VISA APRIL 16.

4. DASHIELL GREATLY RELIEVED, PLANS BRIEF TRIP TO REUNION IN APRIL THEN DEPARTURE FOR U.S. IN JUNE. CONCERNING DISPUTE BETWEEN GOMR AND OIL MARKETING COMPANIES, HE IS HOPEFUL THAT IF REASONABLE ATTITUDE OF NEW FINANCE MINISTER CONTINUES COMPANIES WILL BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT WITH GOMR. ALTERNATIVELY, COMPLEX LEGAL CASE COULD BE SPUN OUT OVER A YEAR OR MORE.

MENDENHALL

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